

# THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

---

---

Vol. X

OCTOBER 1955

No. 112

---

---

## CONTENTS

EDITORIAL		130
TOBIAS—A NEGLECTED CLASSIC	P. A. Bannister	131
LOVE OF GOD	E.B.	138
LOVE THROUGH SUFFERING	Ian C. Laurie	141
THE PASSION	E. M. Belfield	144
THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE APOSTLE	Conrad Pepler	146
CHARITY TOWARDS NEUROTICS—I.	Oswald Sumner	153
	II. Alan Keenan	162
	III. Dr Charles Burns	163
	IV. Dr A. G. Badenoch	165
	V. G.H.	166
	VI. X.Y.	167
THE LAY APOSTLE		168
REVIEWS: John Fitzsimons; J. M. Scott; Conrad Pepler; Seymour Spencer		171
NOTICES		176
EXTRACTS		176

---

---

Contributors are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* to be addressed to The Editor, The Life of the Spirit, Spode House, Rugeley, Staffs. (Telephone: Armitage 331.) The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted, and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. *Subscriptions, Orders and Communications* regarding *Advertisements* should be addressed to the Manager, Blackfriars Publications, 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1 (Museum 5728). Annual Subscription 17s. 6d. post free (U.S.A. \$2.50). *Binding: Orders and Enquiries* for binding volumes of the review may be sent to the Kemp Hall Bindery, 33 St Aldate's, Oxford.

## EDITORIAL

THE main part of the present issue is written by laymen. That laymen should write in these pages is not unusual; indeed, scarcely an issue has appeared without at least one article by a layman. This is as it should be, for the Review was originally intended for the laity, and their welfare has always been its primary concern. The review would be lacking in effectiveness if the only contributors were official theologians; for there are many problems which the layman has to try to solve which do not lie within the experience of the trained theologian. Moreover, the theologian so often speaks a language, clear and intelligible to those who have enjoyed a similar training, but which remains jargon to the uninitiated. Often the layman, perhaps more experienced in the art of letters, can express truths pertinent to the spiritual life in a simpler and more intelligible fashion. And in a journal of this nature he receives the safeguard of an expert theologian to 'vet' his work before it appears in print. What is most desirable for THE LIFE if it is to be of value to its readers, is that the trained theologian should combine with the interested layman in the production of the Review. It would be short-sighted, to say the least, to confine the contributions to the work of laymen; the expert will always have something that the layman lacks, and it is his duty to instruct, guide and lead those who have not had the advantage of the learning he enjoys.

But we must avoid any danger of seeming to ignore the Holy Father's recent warnings about the lay theologian. The lay writer who contributes to these pages has, as we have said, the negative support of theologians in so far as nothing contrary to faith or morals would be allowed to appear; and, more than that, work that is judged by the expert to be doubtful and liable to lead the unwary astray is equally barred from appearing here in print. The lay theologian of whom we have to beware is the one who sets himself up as an authority and tends to make his own dogmas; the layman, too, who allows an anti-clerical prejudice to warp his vision of the authoritative teaching of the Church.

We might draw a parallel with the field of medicine; for few people are ready to submit their health to the care of a 'quack'



doctor who lacks official training and sets himself up as an authority on his own limited experience. Nevertheless medicine has often benefited by the ideas or chance discoveries of the 'layman' who has had the humility to submit them to the experts. It may be that the lay-medico might do yet more were he able to publish his findings or suggestions under expert supervision.

So we hope to be able to encourage lay writers to send their contributions especially with a view to assisting the lay reader to live 'The Life' in the ordinary surroundings of daily life.



## TOBIAS—A NEGLECTED CLASSIC

P. A. BANNISTER

IT is a pity that the story of Tobias is not more widely read by Christians and that it is used so little in the religious instruction of children. Although one of the inspired books of the Old Testament, it is also, as the Monks of Maredsous have pointed out,<sup>1</sup> 'a true guide for the righteous which the Christian can use with practically no modification'.

We need not worry if the versions of the story contain dubious details, or if St Jerome took only one day to translate the Aramaic text into the Latin of the Vulgate. However much they may vary the antics of young Tobias's dog or the description of his adventure with the large fish, all the different versions give a vivid account of the lives of an impoverished and uprooted Jewish family which is at the same time a work of art.

The hardships endured by old Tobias and his family are familiar enough to our world where mass deportations are so nearly accepted as part of the technique of government that newspaper editors have tired of reporting them. Its happy ending is the main difference between the story of Tobias and nearly all the accounts

<sup>1</sup> *A Guide to the Bible*. By the Monks of Maredsous. (Sands & Co.).

we know of the sufferings of the millions of persons displaced since 1940.

The principal characters show an unbreakable faith in God's final mercy. Tobias himself is introduced as one who was righteous from his youth. He would have nothing to do with the idolatry under Jeroboam. He shared his goods with his fellow men. He clothed and fed the destitute and buried the dead with particular reverence and care. After the deportation to Assyria of large numbers of Jews he tried to take on his own shoulders as much as possible of the sufferings of his people, and his charity and integrity won him the approval of the Assyrian king Sargon who seems to have employed him as a kind of Purchasing Officer. The insecurity and fear of those who live under tyranny is skilfully conveyed. After the king's death his son reverses his policy of moderation, and after a massacre of the Jewish exiles in revenge for the Assyrian disaster in Palestine Tobias is caught burying the bodies and forced to flee into hiding with his wife and son.

After the tyrant's assassination the family return but their fragile prosperity does not last. The reminder repeated throughout the story that prayer and fasting should precede indulgence, however normal, is given by the mention of the festival banquet which Tobias leaves untasted after the sudden announcement that the body of a murdered member of his race lies unburied outside. The loneliness of the man who strives to lead a virtuous life in the face of tyranny and the opposition of his own household is well brought out, and the murmuring against him seems to be justified when he is suddenly deprived of his sight after a particularly exhausting round of good works.

His blindness forces his wife Anna to find weaving work outside their home to earn 'what she could get for their living by the labour of her hands', and when one day she comes home exhausted carrying a kid which is a present from her employer she is understandably exasperated by her husband's scruples about accepting it lest it be stolen. Her outburst expresses the familiar impatience of the practical person who has delivered the goods with those who must quibble about the means.

It is evident thy hope is come to nothing and thy alms now appear.

From the two great prayers which follow springs the subsequent action of the story. Both are made simultaneously by per-



sons living far from one another and ignorant of each other's plight. Tobias resigns himself to God's will and asks only that he may be delivered from his present helplessness by a peaceful death. Sara prays that she may be delivered from the curse that has already killed her seven previous husbands or allowed to die.

Both prayers start by praising God and they contain no suggestion of self-pity. Sara ends hers on a splendid trumpet-note of confidence.

For thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm thou makest a calm and after tears and weeping thou pourest in joyfulness.

The manner in which the prayers are made should be noted. They are not formal, prescribed utterances but spontaneous and uninhibited cries for help directed loudly but privately to the ear of God. Sara's is particularly interesting, not only because of the beauty of its words but also on account of the circumstances in which it is made. She secludes herself in a room at the top of the house and prays for three days in tears, fasting all the time. To be nearer God one must withdraw further from the world and its appetites, and fasting helps this withdrawal.

Their prayers are heard and the angel Raphael is sent 'to heal them both', but before he appears old Tobias is certain his prayer has been answered and that he will be allowed to die. He sends for his son Tobias the younger and delivers his parting instructions. The whole passage is a noble summary of the Christian social virtues.

The young man must ensure decent burial for his parents. He is to keep the commandments of the Lord and be charitable in a practical way.

Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy and with thy garments cover the naked.

The exhortation ends on a more material level when he is told he must immediately arrange to travel to Persia to recover the money his father lent to Gabelus during one of his missions on behalf of King Sargon many years before.

Young Tobias promises immediate obedience. His part so far has been a passive one and we are not told what contribution he makes to the family income. He suggests obstacles to the recovery of the loan: he has never met Gabelus and they would be unable to identify one another. Besides, he doesn't know the way. His

father gently demolishes these objections. Young Tobias has only to show Gabelus the receipt he gave in acknowledgement of the loan and find an expert guide to accompany him.

His son goes forth, probably with very little confidence in his own powers, and almost walks into Raphael who is 'standing girded and as it were ready to walk'. Two questions are enough to establish that the stranger not only knows the route into Persia but has travelled extensively in that country and, most satisfactory of all, has even 'abode with Gabelus our brother'. We can almost hear Tobias catch his breath in 'Stay for me I beseech thee till I tell these same things to my father'. The old man's reply to the angel's salute—'What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness and see not the light of heaven'—is the only remark he ever makes which has a taste of bitterness.

The description of the interview between employer and hired man is strikingly authentic. Raphael's readiness to act as a guide for his son does not at once convince old Tobias and he has to ask a question about his pedigree. The angel's retort—'Dost thou seek the family of him thou hirest or the hired servant himself to go with thy son?'—is the traditional counter to snobs, but he softens it at once by agreeing, 'lest I make thee uneasy', to let Tobias know that he is Azarias (the help of God), the son of Amanias (the grace of God), and the exchange ends with the old man's unconscious irony: 'Thou art indeed of a great family'.

As the two young men set out the figure of Anna springs vividly before us. During the preparations for the journey she has remained in the background, a silent, apprehensive spectator. Now as she watches the figure of her son grow smaller in the distance she can contain her heavy grief no longer:

Thou has taken the staff of our old age and sent him away from us.

I wish the money for which thou hast sent him had never been.

It is the outburst of an exhausted old woman who, after long years of destitution, sees herself robbed of her last chance of a little joy before her life's end.

From this point the plot quickens its pace with the progress of the two travellers. The mention that young Tobias's dog followed them, apparently uninvited, is one of the author's most skilful touches and contributes much of the story's naturalness. After the



heat of the first day's march they bivouac on the bank of the Tigris. Tobias washes his feet in the river and is badly frightened by a large fish which he catches on the angel's instructions and hauls onto the bank. The fish is the key to the future action of the tale, since out of it comes the cure for old Tobias's blindness and the means whereby Sara is relieved from her affliction.

There is nothing especially fanciful about the reference to the gall of the fish as being a cure for diseases of the eye. It is believed that it was commonly used in ancient times for this purpose.

The travellers arrive and in response to young Tobias's query about lodgings Raphael tells him they must go to the house of Raguel, Sara's father, who is a kinsman of Tobias and a wealthy man as the subsequent references to camels and servants seem to testify. The angel now reveals briefly the divine plan for the succour of Sara and the future of young Tobias. He must marry the young woman who, like himself, is an only child and her father's sole legatee.

The young man remarks that he has heard of the deaths of Sara's seven husbands and he has misgivings lest he be the eighth victim. The angel reassures him in words which are a concise expression of the Christian doctrine concerning the end of marriage and the preparation for it. The bride and bridegroom should spend three days together in prayer before the marriage is consummated. When it is they must be 'moved rather for love of children than for lust'. This seems to imply that the seven previous husbands omitted the preparatory period, that their relations with Sara were dominated exclusively by desires of the flesh, and that there must always be this danger if husband and wife do not spend the first few days of their marriage in the way that Tobias and Sara are instructed to do.

Young Tobias is also commanded to throw the liver of the fish onto the fire as soon as he joins Sara and thus drive away the evil spirit which has caused her so much suffering.

They enter Raguel's house and are received with joy. From this moment young Tobias seems to develop character. The rejoicings and congratulations on the discovery of his parentage do not divert him from his purpose and he will join no feasts until Raguel has consented to his marriage with Sara. Raguel, remembering the fate of the seven, is silent and it is not until Raphael reassures him that he consents to the marriage. That he is not

entirely free from anxiety is clear from the account of the grave-digging which he orders the following morning.

Tobias carries out the angel's instructions and the curse is lifted from Sara. They 'prayed earnestly together that health might be given them'. The young husband utters a brief hymn of praise and declares that he has taken his sister to wife only for the love of posterity in which God's name may be blessed forever.

One of Raguel's maidservants reports to her master and mistress that what they dreaded has not happened and Raguel orders a banquet 'for all his neighbours and all his friends'.

At Tobias's request Raphael takes four of Raguel's servants and two camels and brings Gabelus to the wedding feast after reclaiming the loan from him. The subsequent marriage feast is the occasion for great joy now that all the anxieties of those concerned are dissolved and 'is celebrated also with the fear of the Lord'.

Raguel tries in vain to persuade his son-in-law to remain with him indefinitely on the assurance that he will send a messenger to convince his parents he is safe.

I know that my father and mother now count the days and their spirit is grievously afflicted within them.

His father-in-law detains him no longer. A large convoy is made ready to carry the wealth which he bequeaths to Tobias and they leave, sped by the farewell blessing of Raguel and his wife. This expresses all the longing of people who are separated from their loved ones by vast and dangerous distances.

Immediately following the description of the marriage feast we are shown old Tobias saddened only that his son did not return on 'the day appointed'. In contrast his wife is without hope and 'could by no means be comforted'. With the awful routine of despair she strains her eyes on behalf of both of them, scanning the distance for any sign of her son, and eventually it is during one of these daily vigils on a hill that she sights young Tobias and Raphael who have left the main body at the halfway mark, in the angel's words, to 'follow softly after', which conveys perfectly the leisurely padding of the camels.

Then the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before, and coming as if he had brought the news, showed his joy by his fawning and wagging his tail. And his father that was blind, rising up began to run stumbling with his feet: and



giving a servant his hand went to meet his son. And receiving him kissed him, as did also his wife, and they began to weep for joy. And when they had adored God, and given him thanks, they sat down together.

Raphael's proposal to Tobias the younger that they should try to reach his home before Sara and her retinue shows great delicacy. Their arrival in advance would allow the young man and his parents to show their joy unrestrainedly without any feeling of embarrassment in the presence of strangers and would also allow the cure of the old man's blindness to take place in time for his eyes to become accustomed once again to his domestic world which has been hidden from him for four years so that he may fittingly welcome his daughter-in-law.

After Sara's arrival has been celebrated by a banquet, Tobias and his son discuss the payment which should be made to 'Azarias'. They offer him one half of their newly acquired riches and immediately he reveals to them the secret of their redemption and the central doctrine contained by the narrative: prayer to be effective should always be reinforced by corporal works of mercy.

When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. The angel then revealed his identity and after a tender farewell 'he was taken from their sight'.

The story is over and the last two chapters really form an epilogue. Old Tobias's great song of praise fills the whole of the thirteenth chapter and ends in a serene vision of a restored Jerusalem which is repeated in greater detail in the final chapter when he utters his parting message to his son just before his death.

Finally, after the death of his parents, the younger Tobias returns with his whole family to the house of his wife's parents.

And all his kindred, and all his generation continued in good life, and in holy conversation so that they were acceptable both to God and to men, and to all that dwelt in the land.

## LOVE OF GOD

E.B.

FOR the ordinary person, hemmed in by his everyday and often monotonous job, it is very difficult to see any link between his life and the love of God. Exasperating anxieties with regard to meeting his financial commitments, and often worries with regard to health and well-being of his family, seem to preclude any connection between his life as he has to live it and that love of God as exemplified in the lives of saints and possibly 'good' people he happens to know. He may be punctilious about his religious duties, and feel in some dim way that God does hear his prayers, but somehow the love of God is not a reality for *him*. He *wants* to love God but does not know how!

Perhaps if we acknowledge that it is very, very difficult to find God in our modern industrial cities, amidst the noise, dirt, smoke, and artificial crowding together of great numbers of people—perhaps if we recognize that it is hard for some, in these conditions, to admit that there is a God at all, we may then start from very little and try to build on that.

Mother Church has something for all her children and there is no need to seek outside her fold for something that we think may be found elsewhere—in 'spiritism' or the mystics of the East, for example. There is, in the doctrine of the divine indwelling or the abiding presence of God within, pre-eminently a truth that is often overlooked or not understood, and which holds a special meaning for the extraverted age of today. When it is impossible to see the touch of God's hand in anything about us, so ugly does it seem, then let us look within. Sanctifying grace received at baptism, and the presence of God in human souls, is a reality and is a doctrine of the Church also—no less. Can this be true of that disagreeable neighbour next door, that pushing and shoving person on the bus and tube? Yes, it can be true, and in this doctrine Mother Church has comfort and hope for all such. How can we make a beginning? how do we realize this abiding presence of Christ within? This is what Brother Lawrence had to say: 'To be with God it is not necessary to be always in church. We may make a chapel of our heart whereto to escape from time to time to talk with him



quietly, humbly and lovingly. Everyone is capable of such close communion with God, some more, some less: he knows what we can do. Begin then; perhaps he is waiting for a single generous resolution. Have courage. There is but little time to live. . . . Let us live and die with God. . . . Little by little, then, get used to worshipping him in this way; imploring his grace, offering him your heart sometimes during the day, very often in the course of your work, if you are able to. Do not hamper yourself with set rules or forms of devotion, but go on with faith, with love and with humility.' Nothing very complicated here, nothing out of the ordinary: we do not have to be very learned, or well read, or particularly 'good', to practise this. We do not have to be in church, very quiet, or in any special place (although all three may make it easier!). Very often we may have to turn to him in the midst of a crowd, and make a quiet place for him in our own hearts. Perhaps it had better be said here that this 'practice of the presence of God' in our hearts is not meant to take the place of the liturgical worship of the Church, or the receiving of the sacraments—these are necessary to nourish our spiritual life, without which the practice of the presence of God will be rendered more difficult. The first and most important thing is to want God, with a loving movement of our heart towards him. Not for what he can give us, or for the answering of some petition, but because we love him—we who are sustained in being by his love. We may not consciously know that we love him, but if we want him then that is a turning of our wills to him; and God, who can read all hearts and minds, knows he can build on that.

Gradually as this turning to God within us becomes more habitual, we begin to find ourselves looking at people and things in a different way: sometimes, quite suddenly, we will 'see' them for the first time—see them from the inside out, as it were—and when we do that we find that we have a new and hitherto unknown capacity for understanding and love. We become aware of all created things in a different way—not as they affect *me*—but as things in their own right, given us by God for our use, not abuse. Turning more and more to the indwelling Holy Spirit, of which we are the temples, as St Paul reminds us, we must come to see the sacredness and essential holiness of our own bodies. Materialism, and the materialistic outlook caused so largely by the divorce of 'spirit' from 'matter', has very often made us think

of our bodies as being quite separate from our spirit: hence its functions are either thought of, or spoken about, as though they were purely mechanical, or as though they were not quite 'nice'. Neither view is right. Man is an entity—body-mind-spirit—and the three cannot be separated, they must function *together*. It is only by an understanding of what man *is*, that we can come to a realization of the importance of the teaching of the Church on these matters. Especially in regard to the sacred function of sex. If we separate this function from mind and spirit, and think of it as something that only concerns the body, then we get all sorts of abuses, not least of which are artificial birth-prevention, homosexuality, and artificial insemination—all of which are rife today.

The indwelling Holy Spirit, then, begins to enlarge our horizons, and our capacity for understanding—first about ourselves and what we are, extending outwards to include the whole of life. This inner transformation comes about gradually, without our being aware that a change is taking place. Only we are more aware of the divine presence within us, and we do find ourselves turning to him more and more—at all sorts of times and when least expected. From this turning inwards to Christ, our divine guest, we are led outwards away from self, to see the world around us, in some degree with his eyes and with his love. We no longer are immersed in our own problems, or at any rate see them as being exclusive to ourselves, but as part of a larger whole, part of the problem of everyman—of our neighbour. When we have come to this we may feel that there is something we must *do*, and instantly think of this or that cause to which we must give our support. This may be right in individual cases, but more probably there are a number of small things that can be done first, for our neighbour. But most important of all is the fact that we have learned to turn to Christ within our own souls, to draw strength and grace from his indwelling spirit, and thus we can become by this means an active cell of prayer. Christ present, living and acting within and through us. Wherever we are, on crowded trains and buses, or in our own homes—at all times, all places—we can offer up prayers for those around us, for those we know who are in need, and for those suffering everywhere.

We are all called to this apostolate, and it is within the capacity of everyone.



## LOVE THROUGH SUFFERING

IAN C. LAURIE

‘**L**ITTLE children, love one another.’ Do we really love our neighbours as we should? And are we to love them as the world thinks we should? How often do we hear people accuse us of appearing to be unkind, or harsh or callous. ‘Look here’, they say, pointing out some case of social injustice, or one of hardship. ‘Do you call that loving your neighbour?’ And they scoff: ‘Call yourselves followers of Christ?’ One old man I met told me that he believed that organized religion was the prime cause of all the trouble in the world today. We try to console ourselves that these people fail to understand Christ’s teaching, but if that is so we should surely try to enlighten them.

How are we to love our neighbour? Are we merely to visit him when he is sick, clothe him when he is naked, feed him when he is hungry? Indeed, this is by no means unimportant, but our Lord replies: ‘Thus do the heathen and the publican.’ There is more to it than that, it seems. It is because God is one and simple, and the wisdom of Christ is simple for those who have the faith to understand him, that the answer is simple. To love our neighbour is to assist him to perform God’s will, who desired that all men should love him and obey him in all things. ‘Yet’, says Saint Paul, ‘without grace we can do nothing.’ We may want our fellows to possess life everlasting, but unless they first have grace within their souls our desire is vain. Unless we pray for them, as well as help them corporally, our words and example are no more than tinkling cymbal and sounding brass.

‘And the Word became flesh, and dwelt amongst us.’ God became man that he might perform as man, for mankind, an act that would be pleasing to the sight of God, as pleasing as the sin of Adam was displeasing to him. By this supreme act there was to be established once again peace between God and mankind. Yet this peace was not to be a negative thing, the peace when there is not enmity, it was to be that serene state of peace that exists between lovers; thus his biographers say of Saint Ignatius, that when he began to learn latin he was for ever practising *amo, amas*, which he was unable to conjugate further owing to his great understanding of the love that we should bear for God and God bears for us. This was to be a benevolent peace bringing with it

the grace of God, which is no less than the manifestation of God's benevolence upon a soul. Thus 'Grace and Peace to you' is Saint Paul's favourite greeting, and the angels song of the peace that was now to exist between God and man by the birth of the Infant at Bethlehem.

But although Christ became man in order to perform as man and for mankind the supreme sacrifice, he did not withhold from us the opportunity of sharing in the work of the redemption. We know that the purpose of man's existence is to do God's will in all things, that God alone is his true end. Yet man, ever since Adam had chosen to follow his own will in defiance of the will of God, had fallen disastrously short of this ideal condition. But Christ fulfilled perfectly, during every moment of his earthly life, the purpose of his manhood, which is the true purpose of *our* manhood, never deviating for a moment, even on Calvary which was the final and supreme test of his adherence, from the path of love for, and obedience to, Almighty God. Thus he merited supremely for mankind peace with God and the grace to perform those meritorious works which win for ourselves eternal salvation. Yet even this is not all, for Saint Thomas says that as a man in the state of grace (having on a wedding garment, as Christ says), fulfils the will of God, so God fulfils the will of that man in the salvation of another. In this way the just are able to acquire for others, not necessarily only for those who are themselves in a state of grace, either, but even for sinners, the graces which they need for salvation.

God will answer our prayers in the measure of our adherence to him, yet even more so when it is in the face of sufferings, both mental and corporal: thus Christ suffered both the bodily sufferings of the scourging, and the mental anguish of the mock crowning with thorns and the derision of the soldiery. One can more easily remain devoted to the will of God, by grace, when all is well, but it is when everything seems up against us that we should offer ourselves to him in order to draw, by the virtue of our allegiance, grace down upon mankind. Thus loving our neighbour becomes something vital, growing more dramatic and powerful in quality as our loving attachment grows and our sufferings try us more and more: reaching its climax in death if needs be: 'There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends.' So Mary suffered much and offered all. While her



Son was offering the supreme sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind she offered to God her allegiance, to a Father who was permitting so much pain and anguish to hurt her Child. It was this adhesion to God in the face of what seemed a supreme defeat that moved the divine Justice to pour forth upon the world the grace his Son was winning. One may say, I think, that while Jesus atoned, Mary also merited for mankind. Thus Christ had said: 'Rather blessed are they who do the will of my Father.' He meant that Mary had a far greater title than mother of the carpenter of Nazareth, which is what the crowd mistook her for. She was the perfect Mother of the perfect Son, who adhered to God as completely as her Son suffered profoundly. How many mothers would have rebelled against God for allowing such a cruel death to be the lot of their sons, and as unjust as the death of Calvary! Yet in hating God they would be sinning: falling short of that destiny which is mankind's—to adhere to God 'all the days of our life'. Not so Mary, she remained faithful, for had she not offered her Son to God when on the eighth day she took him to be circumcised—to be signed with the sign of God's covenant? 'And this shall be a sign between us' said God to Abraham. Mary does not retract her decision, but offers her sorrows to the Father in order to draw grace down upon mankind. This is her triumph; we can make it ours. This is love of our neighbour, *par excellence*.

In spite then of personal tragedies, in spite of sickness, in spite of corporal and spiritual destitution, we must remain attached to God, for that is our destiny. This is the way to merit for ourselves, and for our neighbours, the way chosen by the saints. Saint Thérèse said as she was dying: 'I did not know that it was possible to suffer so much', and the result of that suffering may be seen today in the multitudes of the faithful who have received help as a result of her intercession, and those who were without the faith and have it now, through her. So particularly in the work of the lay apostolate when one experiences mental and spiritual difficulties and frustrations, they can be offered up, fuel for the flames of the Church's powerhouse.

Christ remained faithful to his Father for grace; we must remain faithful in order to wrest that grace down. Christ suffers alone because he alone is worthy to offer up the supreme sacrifice to God, while we his Church, his Kingdom, his mystical Body, suffer in him, with Mary: *per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*.

## THE PASSION

E. M. BELFIELD

THE Mass is constructed round the Passion of Christ. After the consecration the priest says, 'Wherefore, O Lord, we thy servants, as also thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion of the same Christ thy Son . . .' In every church there is at least one crucifix, every Catholic home has a crucifix in a place of honour and at the end of every rosary there hangs a crucifix. Yet so often our thoughts shy away from meditating on the Passion of Christ. The more one thinks on the Passion, especially on the crucifixion, the more unbearable does it seem to be. Nevertheless the great saints have always stressed this necessity of meditating on the Passion.

A great part of the problem of meditating on the Passion lies in the linking of this terrible unique event with our own lives. The Passion seems too overwhelmingly important to have any possible connection with our own rather prosaic existence. The following is a suggestion which may be helpful in linking up two apparently very dissimilar events, our own lives as we have to live them and Christ's Passion as he died in it.

God's timing is perfect. This simple fact is the central theme in both the Passion and our own lives; it is the link which binds our lives with that of Christ scourged, thorn-crowned and crucified. In a sense the perfection of God's timing, as shown by his Passion, strengthens, on a purely natural plane, Christ's claim to be God.

In the Passion the crucifixion was the central part and the crucifixion was the most ghastly physical torture ever devised by man. This aspect of the crucifixion has recently been brought out in an article on the Holy Shroud by Group Captain Cheshire in *Picture Post* of April 9, 1955. Cheshire writes: 'According to the whim of the executioners, the struggle of a person who is crucified will be shorter and more acute, or less acute but longer. In some cases, ropes were put round his shoulders. In others he sat on a sedile, or a kind of ledge. In all these various ways the pressure on the chest was reduced, so that the pain was less violent, but the death correspondingly prolonged—sometimes over a period of two days. It looks as if there was no support for Christ's feet,



because the Shroud shows the soles fully extended, like a ballet dancer balanced on his toes; and probably no ropes or sedile because when the soldiers came to break his legs they found him already dead. Christ, in fact, had already suffered the full measure of pain and exhaustion of which even he was capable.

'Such, in outline, is the Passion of our Lord, according to the Holy Shroud. And such is the reminder it gives us of how he loved us unto death, even the death of the cross.

'The cross is both the cruellest and most shameful death ever devised by man. Yet it was the instrument which Christ chose to redeem the world.'

Christ purposely chose to come to earth at that particular period in order to suffer this, the most agonising of all physical tortures; no other period of history would have fitted in with God's timing. Never let us forget the scourging, which, as Cheshire points out, could and often did kill a strong man, nor let us forget the crowning of thorns and the journey carrying the cross to Calvary, all integral parts of the Passion.

Christ's Passion is far wider than the purely physical. On the mental side the Passion is the culmination of a long-drawn process; from the first Christ knew what his death would be, and this knowledge, with the fear that the physical agony might prove too much even for him, must have been a far more crushing strain than any mental worries that any of us could be called upon to bear; the stakes were infinitely higher.

This foreknowledge must have increased Christ's loneliness. The disciples never seemed able to grasp what lay in store for him, even though he told them plainly enough. 'Then he took the twelve apostles aside, and warned them, Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and all that has been written about the Son of Man is to be accomplished. He will be given to the Gentiles, and mocked, and beaten, and spat upon; they will scourge him, and they will kill him; but on the third day he will rise again. They could make nothing of all this; his meaning was hidden from them, so that they could not understand what he said.' (Matt. 20, 17 and Mark 10, 32 also tell the same story.) Christ therefore could never expect sympathy from his apostles, as sympathy depends on understanding; perhaps alone St John did have some inkling of the tragedy which was to befall Christ, for Christ loved him in a way that makes one feel there was a bond of understanding between them,

a bond whose depths were revealed when on the cross Christ handed over the care of his mother to St John.

The crucial point is, however, that during those long years of mental passion Christ had no one to whom he could turn for comfort or sympathy. His followers even slept while he was in the Garden. 'Abba, Father, he said, all things are possible to thee; take away this chalice from before me; only as thy will is, not as mine is.' (Mark 14, 36.) This is the cry of a person at the end of his tether, but God's timing is perfect and the necessary strength was given.

The compassion of Christ is also shown by the timing of his death. By his crucifixion Christ virtually abolished crucifixion. To be crucified became an honour, since it recalled the death by which God had delivered the world; hence by dying for us in this way Christ spared many others in the future from suffering this ghastly torture. It was as if God had said, 'Man has devised such an unspeakably brutal death for his fellow men that the Heavens cannot bear it any longer'. Then it was that Christ volunteered to take our humanity. God's timing is perfect.

If we ever doubt the perfection of God's timing (and who does not?) we have only to meditate on the Passion to recall ourselves to sanity. If we sometimes think that the physical and mental tortures of this age are worse than history has ever known and are thus unendurable, the Passion of Christ and his foreknowledge of the Cross should help us to see things in perspective again. God's timing is perfect.



## THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE APOSTLE THROUGH PREACHING<sup>1</sup>

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE apostle, at least for the thesis of this paper, is some sort of a preacher. The apostle is one who is sent by God to spread the Gospel, spread the Kingdom of God, extend the actuality of the Mystical Body; and thus he is sent to break

<sup>1</sup> The substance of a paper read to a conference of Editors of Spiritual Reviews, Cork, July, 1955.

the bread of the Word of God to the multitudes. We need not at this stage indicate how the apostle should preach, for there are many ways in which he may fulfil his mission. But the apostle to be a true apostle must in some way preach the Word of God to others. And it is the purpose of this paper to ascertain what effect, if any, this activity of preaching has upon the apostle himself.

I have suggested elsewhere that in order to have a suitable effect upon his hearers the apostle must also be something of a poet. Now the object of the enquiry is not the effect on the hearers but the effect of speaking upon the speaker. We might begin by asking whether the absence of the poetic genius makes it possible for the preacher to preach without in any sense being moved himself. There are occasions indeed when the histrionic talent of the preacher causes as great an emotional disturbance in his own heart as upon the hearts of his perhaps bewildered audience. There was an experienced English Dominican missionary whose powers of creative imagination were so effective in calling up the scenes of a deathbed or the judgment that he brought upon himself a permanent and irrational terror of death which required a longish illness before his own departure to dispel the horrific images of death. We have all experienced, perhaps with a certain tedium, the preacher who whips himself up into a frenzy of tears or anger. No doubt all this has some connection with the creative genius of the poet reacting on himself. But this is not the effect of apostolic preaching, which is concerned not with fear of death nor with tears or frenzies but with the conveyance of the living Word from God into the hearts of men.

The effect, therefore, of preaching in the sense in which we are using it here, is that of a union between the mind and heart of the listener and the mind and heart of God. We have said that the apostle is concerned to extend the actuality of the Mystical Body and this is simply to assist in making real and actual the unity of the members with the Body of Christ. There is no doubt, as we have suggested in a previous paper, that the preacher in order to achieve this must be something of a poet, since his field of activity is not so much the essence of the souls of his hearers, upon whom the grace of God works immediately and without means or instruments, but upon that wider, vaguer sphere of the psyche, part soul, part emotional reaction to stimuli, part mind, part imagination, part will, part passion. And the 'poetic' apostle works upon



this soil until it is ready for the seed of God's word to fall.

The preaching apostle, therefore, has a dual union to achieve, first a union between himself and God's Word—and this is not simply to be looked at from God's point of view, for the apostle is a man whose whole psyche and personality should be tuned to the Word of God—and then secondly his union with his hearers whom he must prepare for the reception of the seed of the Word. In this way I think we should distinguish the apostle clearly from the prophet, who can be worked on by the divine power of revelation irrespective of his own state of mind and soul. The prophet can be a pure vehicle or instrument. In this sense it may be that many people regard the teacher's task to be that of a certain type of prophet. They think that the teacher is filled up with knowledge, truths, facts, observations, like a dammed-up mill stream—and then at the appropriate moment the sluice gates are opened and all the knowledge is poured out through other channels into other minds. The apostle does not simply store up doctrine, and explanations thereof in his mind to be given out at the appropriate time, standing up in a pulpit remote and cut off from the people, delivering a message. This may be true of certain types of prophecy, where the prophet receives a message of which he has no understanding and simply emits what he has heard without considering its relation to himself. 'One man must die for the people.' Such prophesying has no effect on the prophet. The apostle who studied and prepared himself in this way for his preaching would gain little from his apostolate, which in fact would be likely to prove a more or less fruitless one.

Some preachers in fact become so 'interested' in their subject that they tend to become simply store-houses of distinctions, qualifications, reservations and the like. This interest may become so intense as to prevent the apostle from committing himself to the truths and so proving a barrier to the first sort of union which is necessary in his preaching, the union with the Word of God. This is more noticeable in intellectual circles. In universities, for example, we frequently meet people who are 'interested' in religion, or even interested in the Catholic Church; they discuss the subject incessantly without beginning to approach the faith, far from committing themselves to God, held back by their mental preoccupations. In a lesser degree the preacher may be so interested in the doctrine of transubstantiation as to become de-

void of any devotion to the Holy Eucharist and to live out of touch with the living presence of the Word therein. Needless to say they leave their audiences cold and bored as distinctions and explanations follow one another in an admirably logical sequence.

It is clear, then, that the apostle will not be effective in his mission unless he removes certain obstacles and avoids certain dangers in his own psychological make-up. Though he keep his eye primarily on the work to which he has been sent, his first pre-occupation must be to remove obstacles in himself to union with the Word. I do not speak here of the obvious need to live in a state of grace, but of the more subtle need to form his own psyche so that it may become receptive of the Word of God—the need to preserve his imagination and his mind from becoming fixed in his own small world. He must remove the obstacles of a sluggish sensitivity, a laziness about the training of his interior senses; he must clear away the habit of attachment to his own ideas and enthusiasms.

The human activity in the reception of sacramental grace is that of removing obstructions (*removens prohibens*); and this is the first objective of the apostle, removing the debris of his own personality. But also he has to clear away the debris of sluggish sensibility, of stupidity, of hardness of heart in his listeners. He has to become united with his hearers, who begin as a rule by erecting a protective barricade against the apostle. No union will be brought about simply by giving them the plain truth. Their armour of resistance to a preacher will be quite thick enough to throw off all his nicely fashioned arrows of finely and accurately phrased statements of exact truth. He must first leap the barricades, associate himself so closely with them that they find themselves associating with a friend and throw off all their defences. This does not of course imply talking down to the congregation from the height of the pulpit, fondly imagining that the apostle need only throw crumbs of the bread of the Word on the head of the multitude for them to open their mouths to catch it. This bread must be distributed as the Eucharist is distributed from hand to mouth, often first receiving it oneself: priest and people are associated in the one act, and the apostle also in his preaching is communicating with his hearers. This destruction of 'sermon-resistance' or 'apostle-resistance' among the people therefore demands a great humility. The pulpit raised above the heads of the congregation may be an

unfortunate physical necessity; but in reality the apostle will be the same person preaching to a thousand or talking personally to a single individual. He will be entering into the sensibility of each of his hearers, sharing by sympathy in their personal difficulties in life in this world of ours, he will share their enthusiasms, their anxieties, their way of thought and life. He is a sinner mixing with sinners, not to increase wickedness, but sharing in sin to turn his and their eyes towards the divine Word. If you stand in a busy street and stare intently at a chimney-pot it is said that you soon gather a crowd round you, all craning their necks to see what is afoot; then lost in the crowd you trip quietly away. Staring at the heavens the apostle does not trip away, yet he is lost in the crowd of his hearers. They become intent upon the glories of which he is speaking and oblivious of the speaker. By means of this sort, he clears away the debris of indifference and sluggishness. And association with one's audience on an equal footing requires true humility, an admission that their feelings and thought-forms are real, that life is a flowing stream of actual existence in the individual listener as in the vast congregation and not the quick cinematographic succession of 'still' abstractions. The apostle then must remove the obstacle of distance and height, the obstacle of being formed in a different mental and spiritual tradition from his hearers, the obstacle of self-confidence in the possession of the truth.

I do not mean to suggest that the apostle has to become identified in every way with the people to whom he is sent. That would not mean sanctification; quite the contrary. He has not to *become* a sinner. He has not to set out to experience all that the 'men of the world' experience. Such a suggestion is obviously absurd. But he has first of all to realize that he is *already* a sinner, and this self-knowledge will set him among his fellows as well as keep him at God's feet.

It is by accepting reality in himself and in the world around that the apostle gains the means of communication with men. He communicates, that is, he lives a life that is common with the men of today. He does not try to put the clock back, imagining himself another St Dominic preaching to the Albigenses or yet a St Paul expounding the resurrection to the Athenians. Brought up on the great traditions of the Church, particularly on the tradition of St Thomas Aquinas, the apostle has to beware lest he uses the lan-



guage of a past age—perhaps even he may have learnt to live in a past age, like the scholarly lady who falls in love with the historical figure she studies. Such people cease to communicate with the present. But communicating with modern man is an ascetic practice. The apostle has to penetrate into homes with the wireless blaring or even sit through a silly film in a dark and stuffy hall.

But let us leave the ascetical side of the apostle's life in which he learns the moral virtues by the very fact of fulfilling his mission effectively, and turn now to the most important aspect, the growth of the apostle's contemplation in the midst of his activities. The preacher who pours himself out in his sermons and writings in such a way that he has nothing left inside himself and falls back empty and exhausted is not fulfilling his mission. He has been sowing chaff, not seed. Fr Bede Jarrett used to say of the preacher's voice that if he trained it truly the more he spoke the stronger it should become, just as the more muscle you use the more muscle you develop. In a far deeper and truer way the more one speaks the truth the more one possesses the truth. I believe it is St Thomas who points out the contrast between material and spiritual wealth. The more goods or money you give away or spend, the less you have of your own; but the good things of the spirit, the insight into truth, the love of God and men and even the general culture of a well-balanced human life, these things you can never distribute in such a way that you are left with less. On the contrary you pour out these gifts on others and in doing so make firm your own possession of them and acquire even greater spiritual wealth. Thus, the apostle in expounding the great mysteries of the faith has to look at them first with growing appreciation and then he has to see them as they appear to his listeners. He begins to see other facets of these truths. And if he has the patience and the zeal to discuss them with a non-believer or with a half-hearted Christian or with a fervent contemplative—and this is certainly his duty as opportunity arises—so will he extend his own experience of the Word of God. This must be the fact in every instruction of a convert; so many of the misunderstandings begin to be overcome as instructor and convert combine their experiences and understanding of the truth.

Perhaps for an Editor the same may be said for the manner in which he considers all the contributions that are laid on his table. If he has his own set views and no contributor is allowed to

publish anything in his review which does not fit in with his own pretty theories, then he is failing as an editor and as an apostle. But if he approaches each MS with sympathy, i.e. with the beginning of a unity with his contributor, then his own understanding of the truth will be deepened even by the MSS which he rejects. The Editor must be *en rapport* with his contributors as well as with his readers, and that unity is part of his contemplative life, part of his unity with the Truth, Goodness and Beauty of God. Theoretically, then, the more MSS the Editor reads as well as the more he publishes the greater contemplative he becomes.

So it is that the theological virtues develop in the true apostle to the degree in which he is fulfilling his mission. He loves his stupid listeners or readers more intensely the more he speaks or writes to them about the love of God; and at the same time and through the same work his love of God increases. Closely associated with the action of the Eucharist, the action of the apostle makes for actual charity and for unity. By unity and charity, wisdom and understanding take greater possession of the preacher. Thus the Holy Trinity dwells more and more completely in the heart of the apostle to the degree in which he is sharing these infinitely good things with others. The apostle is a means towards the unification of the Mystical Body in his own person; his action draws God closer to himself and men closer to God in the living words he speaks or writes. In all this work of unification, the work of the theological virtues which synthesise all other activities by informing them with wisdom and love, the apostle who is true to his vocation is sanctifying himself almost without thinking of himself. For he is entering more and more fully into the unity of Christ's Body. This work of his then increases as his life continues, approaching more and more closely to the unity of heaven, the Vision where all unity is finally perfected. This is growth in contemplation, i.e. growth in the fulness of the unity of Christ's body through the theological virtues.

The apostle draws men and God towards each other in his action and in so doing makes for an extension of the contemplative life, makes for the fulness of vision in heaven. If this does not sanctify him, nothing can.

## POINTS OF VIEW

---

### CHARITY TOWARDS NEUROTICS

#### I

DOM OSWALD SUMNER

**I**N THE issue of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* Nos 110-1 there is a letter requesting help and guidance on the very pertinent question of the responsibilities of a Christian who has to live in close proximity with neurotic personalities. This is obviously a very live issue to which careful thought must be given, for it is a question of integrating into Christian life the new knowledge of what may be considered a modern disease and the many very remarkable discoveries that have been made by those who have concerned themselves with its diagnosis, origin and cure.

While defining just what we are discussing when we here speak of a neurosis I propose to omit those aspects of the subject that are rather the particular business of the medical physician, as it is he who will diagnose the condition and suggest treatment. I will therefore leave aside conditions dealt with by psychosomatic medicine and also the functional diseases and try to give some idea of the third aspect of this question, i.e. disorders of the personality function which reveal to us that the person is neurotic. We will call this a personality or character neurosis. This 'may or may not have any physical symptoms, but there is always a far-reaching distortion of the character structure revealed in the difficult and abnormal attitudes of mind displayed. Suspiciousness, resentment, aggressiveness, callousness, or self-pity, a complaining attitude, an incipient demand for consideration and help from others, evasion of responsibility, chronic dependency, or else aloofness, lack of overt-feeling for, or interest in, others, solitariness; all these and other "neurotic character trends" are hall-marks of deep-seated neurosis'. (Guntrip. *Psychology for Ministers and Social Workers*, p. 56.) Such character neuroses are characterized by retardation in



the development of psychic life. The grown-up neurotic has an infantile psyche; he behaves like a child in adult life-situations.

A neurosis is not something to be ashamed of, nor is it a rare and strange complaint. In fact we common mortals are *all* neurotic somewhere, and not only we but it is also plain that the Saints also have their neurotic patches in life—a fact of which we should be warned lest our attempts to imitate the Saints lead us to copy their neurosis rather than their sanctity. This diseased state of humanity seems to be an effect of original sin which is clearly visible on all sides and is a common burden that we all share and that unites us all as sick and ailing members of one fallen race. Indignant rejection of this condition would perhaps show a lack of understanding of the far-reaching effects of original sin.

When once a man is able to accept the fact that men in general are neurotic and suffer in general from characteriological disturbances a great step towards the solution of our problem has been taken. The neurotic so frequently regards himself as an outcast; almost as one who has had a curse put on him; and in any case as a lonely and misunderstood soul, so it is well for him to understand that many round him also have their neurotic conflicts and difficulties, and realize that, though he may not have spotted them, others are suffering more or less from difficulties similar to his own. For the sake of the neurotic it is important that this should be thoroughly realized so that when he finds that a neurosis is not a disgrace and may even be the sign of a very sensitive character, with great, though so far unrealized, potentialities, his loneliness, isolation and despair will be broken down and he will realize that he is indeed largely as the rest of men.

It is most important that the neurotic should understand that the neurosis has a valuable contribution to make to life. This is not just a horrible disease that has grabbed him as a chance victim from the crowd, but the neurosis has a purpose, a reason—it is trying to achieve something, to make its victim pay attention to requirements of his character which he has utterly neglected. Psychologists hold that it is amply proved that men develop according to certain laws, through various well defined stages from infancy to maturity. But suppose a man does not make the grade, he is not thereby just allowed to go on with the rest of the form, trusting it will make no difference in the long run—no, he will move on, but part of his personality will have become arrested and will *not*

go on with him. Later on his development requires that this unsuccessful side of his personality be brought up to date also; and it is at this point that the neurosis steps in and *forces* him to give his attention to these infantile aspects. He may refuse to attend to the urgent demands of nature but then he will continue to suffer from the neurosis until he has fulfilled these requirements and of course all those about him will suffer also. *He is being faced with an urgent moral problem.* This is the positive purpose of neurosis—to *force us to develop to the stature that our nature requires of us individually.* A profound understanding of this truth has very frequently been the first step towards a solution of the problem of the neurosis—for when a thing has a purpose and an aim we gain the courage to face the problem and stop playing hide and seek with ourselves. Those acquainted with writings on the spiritual life will recognize the parallelism here with what spiritual writers call the ‘retarded soul’ and their advice on the treatment of this condition.

Experience shows that it is also important for the neurotic to understand something of the difference between a neurosis and a psychosis, or lunacy. A neurosis is to be regarded as an effect of an unsolved emotional conflict within the personality, usually of a very complicated nature. Thus a woman may have a natural desire for marriage, while another set of emotions, connected with the mother, may, in the unconscious, echo her words that marriage is a deception and a snare and she trusts her daughter will never allow herself to be caught in *that* trap. The neurosis may then develop as a false attempt to solve this *emotional conflict*. In a psychosis, in madness, on the other hand the ego is entirely overthrown, contents of the unconscious overflow the conscious mind to such an extent that there is no ‘I’ to refer anything to, so there is no one there to speak to or contact. Psychotics, lunatics, are lost in the world of dreams. There is an infinity of difference between these two conditions and the neurotic needs to be assured that a neurosis does not mean that one is ‘going out of one’s mind’.

Thus far I have only suggested how the neurotic can be helped to see his disease as the constructive thing it is: to be frank with himself and admit his difficulties at least to himself without fearing that he is thereby condemning himself as a lunatic.

Our questioner asks for guidance in personal relationships with neurotics, so I think I must make a distinction between the different kinds of relationships.

(1) You have to live in close contact with such a sick personality, and while desiring a Christian relationship wish to avoid contamination with the disease. For you an understanding of the disease and its purpose is most important. But your charity will not lead you to reject the use of 'antiseptics' to be mentioned later. You must not expect to cure the patient, but your love and compassion and understanding will begin to open up a way to recovery and growth and may even be a help to an eventual healing.

(2) Are you a person who feels it is your duty to devote yourself to the cure of the sick person? This situation is full of snags. Very frequently you will be an interfering busybody who feels that your vocation in life is to put everyone else right, making yourself into a monitor, guide and guardian of any victim who will submit to your power demands (disguised under the headings of 'love' and 'duty'). You can still do a great deal of good even in this case, provided you have the courage to undergo a thorough course of psychotherapeutic treatment yourself first.

(3) You have been approached by the sick person for help, and there being no trained psychotherapist available you have to see if you can manage to help in some way. Of course this will place a heavy burden on you and will require sacrifices of time and energy—but if you are very humble and charitable and take the trouble to make some study of this condition you will be able to help. The situation will be very hopeful because it means that the sick person realizes he is sick and, further, knows that his sickness is one that can be helped by personal relation with another.

To whichever of these classes you belong, remember that you *must* not only have a sympathetic comprehension of the emotional disturbances distressing the patient, but *you must also love him*. Without this love, all knowledge will be in vain. You must be like our Lord who had 'compassion on the multitude'.

Seeking now for suggestions how we can deal with neurotic people when we find them in our close vicinity—in the family, community, at work, etc. Perhaps the techniques of the psychotherapist can help us here—after all, he has to deal with such people for many hours each day and one could expect that he might therefore become very vulnerable to their behaviour and



emotions. The psychotherapist safeguards himself in several important ways:

(a) He only sees the patient for a specific time—usually an hour. When the time is up the patient leaves and another comes to take the next hour. This canalizes the patient—he knows that he has boundaries and cannot flow on and on for ever in every direction.

(b) The psychotherapist sees the patient on his own ground, i.e. at his consulting room. The patient has to *come* and when the visit is over he must *go*.

(c) The patient has to *pay* for his treatment. This means that he will not just fritter away his time but will try to get his money's worth as quickly as possible. He therefore *values* the time he takes and does his best to come to grips with his difficulties.

(d) The psychotherapist takes an objective view of the patient and his emotions and disturbances. To him the patient is like the body lying on the operating table—with the additional fact that it is also a personality he is dealing with. Should the surgeon be suddenly told that this is his wife he is operating on, a very disturbing emotional factor would be introduced with the knowledge of this very subjective relationship. The therapist to a considerable extent remains aloof from such a subjective relationship with the patient.

(e) The psychotherapist is trained to have an understanding of the psyche and the neuroses and so has a sympathetic comprehension of the emotional disturbances distressing his patient.

I am suggesting that, *mutatis mutandis*, we can all learn something from this technique which would go a long way towards solving the problems raised by your correspondent.

(a) Do not let the neurotic have unlimited access to you. It is most important, if possible, to build some sort of wall round oneself and *time* is very important here. If you are in a position of authority, e.g. a matron in charge of nurses, a mother superior, etc., then only allow a strict, known, ration of time to the neurotic. When this is over say you have work to attend to and dismiss them. However, circumstances may make this more difficult, e.g. a neurotic woman nagging her husband of an evening by the fireside. If he listens by the hour he will become 'infected', so he must find a way of bringing the thing to an end, of withdrawing to attend to his own affairs: his books, hobbies, sport; he will often enough in practice take himself off to the 'local'.

(b) Unlike the therapist, we have to meet the patient on our own ground. And it is here that I suggest that we need a sacred spot that is our own which the patient must keep off. This could be our own chair, our own corner, desk, room, etc. In many monasteries the monks are not allowed to go into the cells of others save on special specified types of business. This has a most important psychological function—it keeps the monks disinfected from these contaminations. I know a person who was being battered very considerably by a neurotic and who, as a protection, arranged a symbolic ‘magic circle’ in the form of a circular carpet in her room. She found that as long as she sat in this protective circle the patient was unable to infect her. If unable to procure a magic circle of this type one could certainly solemnly draw a circle round one’s chair which would have the desired effect. Lest this proceeding be thoughtlessly dismissed as not even worth consideration, I beg the reader to refresh his memory of the meaning and purpose of the symbol. Though the world at large has largely lost an appreciation of the value and meaning of the symbol as an outward sign of an inward condition, we as Catholics should have preserved ourselves from this loss. We must remember that symbols are not only to be found in sacraments, sacramentals and religious rites, but that man is a symbol-producing creature and that each one of us is a living fountain of symbols which are born, live and die in us throughout our lives. We must put aside our prejudices and realize that a great many external religious acts—use of holy water, genuflections, processions, circumambulations, anointings, blessed bread, etc.—have a symbolic and therefore psychological signification and produce in the psyche the effect they imitate or signify outwardly. A living appreciation of this would greatly enrich our religious practices and also give us some insight into psychological methods that can be used to help us in daily experiences. Thus *rites d’entré* should often be used to canalize psychic energy so that positive work can be achieved and, though so-called ‘will power’ can often bring about the same ends, this is often at the cost of great, unnecessary expenditure of vital energy.

(c) If you only allow a limited access by the neurotic you are in some sense forcing him to pay—for he can only have a limited quantity of your time and attention. But you could and should go further and demand some payment in kind for services rendered, i.e. for love and patience given. You could make it a *sine qua non*

that some service be done in return. We do not appreciate what we do not pay for, and if the neurotic sucks up your energy then the least he can do is to give some return. It occurs to me that such payment could well take the form of prayers to be said for one or other of your intentions, or alms to some charity in which you are specially interested. However the payment is made, it should not be for some good work of general interest but for one of importance to *you*.

(d) Already these precautions will enable you to take a more detached attitude to the patient and preserve yourself to a large extent from 'infection'. You will certainly become infected if you live in a continuous state of emotion owing to the neurotic disturbances in your vicinity. But you can actually practise symbolic acts of disinfection, e.g. sprinkling the room with holy water before the person comes and after he leaves; washing your hands before and after as a ceremonial cleansing; even a positive use of a disinfectant, or smoking a special cigarette would symbolize the same separation from contagion.

(e) It would seem to be impossible to assist any neurotic if he does not most urgently feel the need of assistance. If he is blind to his condition, or attached to it, refusing to take any steps to free himself from it, in other words refusing in reality to grow up, to become adult, mature, then no one can help him at all. For this reason there is a world of difference for the psychotherapist when the patient comes on his own, seeking release, and when the patient comes just to please relatives while being convinced there is really nothing at all wrong with him. So *insight* on the part of the neurotic is quite essential. If there is none, then it is a waste of time trying to give positive help. Charity to yourself requires that, if you are forced to live in close contact with such a neurotic, you keep as free as possible from entanglement in the neurosis. This means that a certain distance be kept between the healthy and the sick person for a close relationship will certainly involve both parties. 'If the blind lead the blind they will both fall into the ditch.' In so far as the neurosis denotes an infantile, undeveloped condition it is not possible to relate to that side of the personality for one is talking to a querulous child at that point. It is only if the more developed side of the person is willing to introduce you to this child that you can really be of use. Therefore when there is no insight it is essential to keep your distance, not to get involved in



neurotic discussions and as far as possible remove all 'hooks' within oneself on which the neurotic can hang his projections.

So we now reach the most important point that it is necessary to have some understanding of neurosis yourself if you have to come into close contact with neurotics. And this for two reasons:

(1) That we may have some insight into the processes at work in the neurosis. Without this we just talk a lot of nonsense; tell the patient to pull himself together, realize this is all imagination, that a little will-power will overcome difficulties of this nature, that he is only being self-willed, obstinate, etc. Unless we realize that when we talk in this way we are talking absolute nonsense we had better keep as far away from neurotics as possible, in the name of charity. Fairly simple books are available that will to a large extent give us the insight we need and with insight comes a growth in charity and compassion for the sufferer (e.g. the book by Guntrip quoted above).

(2) Most important of all—we *must have some understanding of our own neurosis before we can help another*. For this reason analysts take a long course of analysis before they are able to act as psychotherapists to others. So before you can do much to help others you must have taken a considerable amount of trouble with your own psyche and character. If we do not do so we may well have an intellectual understanding of the neurosis of another and its effects on the life of those about him, but we will not see that from a slightly different angle we are also performing the same antics though completely blind to them. If we know nothing of our own neurosis we will just project it on the neighbour and try to correct in him troubles that are really in ourselves. If it is true that when the blind lead the blind they will both fall into the ditch, this will be less true if both know how blind they are. Then their very company will keep them from falling into the ditch, for each can advance more cautiously and warn the other of dangers which he has discovered lying ahead. It is better still if the lame or halt lead the blind, if each knows his own disease, for between them they may make one whole man.

No one can really set out to help a neurotic from any superior position. If anyone can see the mote in his neighbour's eye but has not begun to detect that he has a beam in his own, then he just *cannot* help. Let him steer clear in the name of charity. A profound humility is required in this matter, and not now a theoretical,

notional humility, learned from one's spiritual reading books, but an actual experience of poverty and wretchedness. This will enable us to see that if we are not obviously, overtly, neurotic it is only by a great grace of God; and also to realize that many of the things we see and perhaps criticize in our neighbour are indeed somehow and somewhere in ourselves also.

A few final words on your letter. 'If anyone demands your coat, give him your cloak too. If he compels you to go a mile—go two'. These hyperbolic statements cannot be applied when it would cause considerable harm both to the neurotic and yourself if you acceded to his every demand for time and attention, or even if it harmed them at all. Charity demands that we should help our neighbour, a help that is often best given by keeping the proper framework of life, in the form of a fairly flexible order in such things as time of rising and sleeping, times for meals and work, grace at meals and regular times for prayer.

I think it could be maintained that in our Lord's day neurotics were probably less prevalent than now, but this is a speculation it would be outside the scope of this paper to develop.

It should not be too difficult to spot obvious neurotics who seem really to be the object of this discussion. If you have already spent a good deal of time in their company, so many projections and counter-projections will have been made that the only course seems to be to disinfect yourself as far as possible and leave outsiders to try and effect a cure. In the meantime take steps to deal with your own problems.

I find the suggestion that those who aim at Christian perfection should be willing to forego self-protection, and act supernaturally, is most distressing. How could you know you are acting supernaturally in such a case? How could you know that this idea is not a neurotic reaction to neurosis masking itself under the title of supernatural? This is indeed the blind leading the blind. A good antidote to such an outlook is to be found in Fr Goldbrunner's little book *Holiness is Wholeness* which I can strongly recommend to those faced, not only with their own personal problem of growth in holiness, but also those who have to come in contact with neurotics.

## II

FR ALAN KEENAN, O.F.M.

NEUROSIS is a state of mental illness due to the absence of integration or harmony in a personality. The reasons for such lack of balance and harmony are always multiple and complex, the factor of faulty early relationship to parents being of major significance. No neurotic really knows why he is out of tune with reality and neither do his neighbours. Charitable people cannot cure him and he cannot cure himself.

Obviously there are different kinds of neuroses and any one neurosis can exist in different individuals in degrees varying from the very mild to the very severe. How prevalent is neurosis in the population? One estimate (1947) based on the findings of the National Health Service recorded that one out of every three patients seen under the Service was found to be suffering from mental malaise in forms varying from the very mild to the very severe. The severe forms of mental malaise constitute the classical types of neurosis. These classical, severe types of mental illness are readily discernible, for those who suffer from them are very badly adjusted to their environment. Their emotional life is tortured, they are parasitic on the affections of others and they are usually very self-centred. All of us are these things at some time; the neurotic is all of them all the time.

What are our obligations in charity towards these severely tried individuals? Your correspondent supplied the correct answer. It is to convince them of their need for treatment. True charity not only commands this but it forbids us to assume the presumptuous role of endeavouring to train highly unstable personalities in the art of walking the thin-wire of reality. Should we find that a neurotic has made us a substitute for the specialist who could cure him, we must withdraw our company from him.

True charity towards ourselves bids us to avoid neurotic company if we genuinely find there is proximate danger of psychic infection. We can give our counsel and give our comfort to the neurotic so long as we are not assuming the role of his mental specialist, or not confirming him in his neurosis, but the amount of time or energy we can give is relative to the patience,



endurance and stability we possess ourselves. No one obviously is obliged to go beyond that level of charity where through too close proximity with morbid emotions he is in grave danger of serious uncharity in himself.

Within such limits there is every reason to give our neurotic neighbours what kindness we can. In a way they bear the mental Passion of Christ; and it is not impossible by the light of faith to love in them the Christ of Gethsemani.

### III

DR CHARLES BURNS

YOUR correspondent, G.H., has raised a very pertinent question when he asks what should be the attitude of a Christian layman towards neurotic individuals, who seem, in our day, to multiply in our midst.

His letter raises two main issues. One: is it helpful and right for a neurotic to be listened to sympathetically, even by persons with no professional knowledge? Two: is it advisable for such a listener to run the risk of contamination, distress of mind, and waste of time, by giving charitably of his sympathy; is it even his Christian duty so to do?

To answer the first, one must have some notion as to the nature of neurosis. Is a neurotic person essentially selfish, as G.H. suggests? A neurotic may be said to be egocentric or egoistic (which is not the same thing) because, being rebuffed and thwarted in his relationships with others, and frustrated in his life activities, he is driven back on himself; he is at the same time desperately trying to find his way out of the impasse into which he has been driven by his anxiety, his inferiority, and feelings of tension, lassitude, and ill-health.

Fr Keenan, O.F.M., in his book *Neuroses and the Sacraments* gives good definitions of neurosis from a layman's point of view: 'The distinctive mark of the neurotic is that he tries to adjust himself in the wrong way'; and again: 'The neurotic does not adjust himself to reality properly. He is out of tune rather than out of touch with reality.' The reasons for this failure of adjustment lie in the emotional sphere of the mind, are both past and

present, conscious and unconscious. They cause the reason to be clouded and the will rendered almost impotent (this applies in some measure to all of us!). They also befog the spiritual or religious sphere (here it is important to understand the relation between the natural and supernatural spheres of the soul).

To have an understanding and sympathetic listener is a craving, with most types of neurotics. (The chap who is just liverish is more likely to be gloomy and peevish.) It is of value to neurotics to be listened to, provided that the listener is able to bear the burden, by virtue of his balance and sanity of outlook, as well as sympathy. Anything like contempt, or excessive heartiness, or sentimentality, is worse than useless. Yet a certain amount of humour, even bantering, may be useful, provided that there is already a good relationship between them.

Now, a psychotherapist is as it were a professional listener, and he is protected by his knowledge (i.e. he knows where he stands), by the time-limits which he sets, and by his detachment (which is not indifference). The same applies in a sense to the confessor. But the poor layman on whom the neurotic pours his troubles has no such safeguards.

So we come to the second part of the question, and we can say that if the layman feels beyond his depth, or that his own nerves are unduly strained, e.g. that he is sleeping badly, then he must be firm and not do it. When it comes to this point he must counsel his neurotic friend to seek professional help (provided he gets the right kind, without falling into the hands of electric shock merchants).

The trouble is that in our day, it would seem that the tide of neurosis has mounted so high that it has overtaken the supply of people who are able to cope with it. Too many doctors, priests, and even psychiatrists, have less knowledge of what constitutes neurosis than many well-read laymen.

G.H. is right in thinking that neurosis is our modern type of plague, that it must be brought into the open, and that we can all help to combat it in one way or another. It is perhaps for the theologian to define how far heroic charity is demanded of us, and in what spheres, but he would agree, I think, that in this matter prudence is also to be invoked: it is not our charitable intent which is to be limited, but we have to know our limitations, perfect our understanding, and act with prudence.

## IV

DR A. G. BADENOCH

G.H. RAISES the question of practical charity towards neurotics. He is right in saying that neurotics are increasing in numbers. He makes the following difficulties about our contact with them as fellow men and women. I quote him, and give my humble suggestions.

(a) 'Very few people have a nervous system strong enough to cope with a neurotic without undue strain—in fact without becoming infected.'

This is a matter of degree, just as neurotics themselves differ in degree. The more severely disturbing cases should be referred to—but not left to—the experts (who often break down themselves, be it noted). Both for neurotics and for their friends, it is often a form of martyrdom. On the whole, near relatives should keep out of it if possible. The inter-personal relationships that have contributed to the neurosis are still operating, and those near and dear to them often do more harm than good by meddling. But charity—a cup of cold water in Palestine, a cup of tea in higher latitudes—is still obligatory. Don't try to 'cure' them. Leave that to the experts—who often fail. But time and grace rarely fail.

(b) 'It seems as if neurotics attach themselves more particularly to sensitive people—who are therefore more vulnerable.'

True again. If you are very vulnerable, try to minimise contacts. If you are strong enough, and the case is mild enough, you can do a great deal of good by this very sympathy.

(c) 'By its nature, this disease makes its victims demand the full and constant attention of their audience; it often becomes impossible for any work to get done when they are around—or not properly done.'

True again. But full and constant attention is bad for everybody and *a fortiori* for neurotics. The impersonality of a good *ad hoc* institution will do more good. There are many such, but still not enough, and their waiting-lists are usually long. Once 'in', visiting by friends and relatives should be as assiduous as the expert staff will allow. Don't let the neurotic feel he has been 'put away'. We do, as the late Father Leycester King, S.J., pointed



out so often, need more Catholic institutions of this kind, particularly homes sited in the country where normality may be restored by sound plain food, natural pursuits and a simple liturgical life. 'We have Catholic nursing homes', I once heard him say, 'where Catholic nurses look after you after a Catholic surgeon has removed your Catholic gall-bladder, but few homes for the mentally distressed.'

(d) 'It sometimes seems as if patience and humouring does no good to the neurotic, but merely increases the selfishness which seems to be the root of the neurosis. (Yet thwarting has frightening effects).'

Every word of this is true. It is the whole case of the writer of these answers. G.H.'s next two paragraphs may also be answered here. Neurosis is indeed a modern 'plague'. It is a disease like any other. As with any disease, diagnosis, i.e. facing the facts and interpreting them by expert knowledge, is the essential beginning. All but the mildest cases should be seen by an expert. A surprisingly large proportion will be found to be suffering from some handicap, that simple charity can do nothing to help.

Neurosis does spread. It is particularly harmful in a family where there are children. In such a case there is a clear indication for hospitalisation, if only for a short period.

Last two paragraphs: in such cases, charity may be heroic, but my whole point is that it should never be foolish. There is no doubt that friendship leads many a neurotic (and worse) back to health. But without special gifts, and preferably expert training in this direction, mere kindness often, as G.H. suggests, defeats its own end.

I don't know if this is an authoritative answer, but it is based on my experience and on the teaching of a great psychiatrist now unfortunately retired from practice.

## V

IF, AS many think, we are nearing the end of a stage in the Church's development—it is suggested we are 'nearing the "Unitive" stage of the Church's life', 'entering into the "Age of Mary"',—if (as I think very likely) there is truth in some of this, it seems obvious

that just at this time must be a 'dark' period, just as in individual spiritual experience. The devil, in other words, is more than usually busy. May it not then be that those people who are weak in some way will be particularly vulnerable—and by these the devil can do a great deal of work—even if it be only 'nuisance value'? May he not be upsetting the rest of us through them, while trying to ruin these people utterly? In which case, instead of merely trying to exercise patience with the neurotic, can we not make a positive plan of campaign? If the next 'age' is to be more 'spiritual'—as seems certain—then we must expect in any case to meet the devil more intimately. Well, maybe this is the beginning of his attack! How shall we launch *our* offensive to this? I believe the mere realization of it, with the determined effort to *fight*, and not be dismayed, would disarm the enemy as well as anything. Psychologically, see how this attitude always prevents an attack from a pugnacious person. As another example, see how a class of children will 'play up' if teacher is 'under the weather'. At all events—still subject to your ruling—I begin to believe that something of this sort is the answer. For a great deal of our difficulty in bearing with these afflicted ones is fear. Perhaps fear of the unknown—because we cannot see what is the root of the trouble, nor know how to deal with it. If we could recognize it, and be determined to deal with it in the way most pleasing to God—might not half the enemy's strength be destroyed? By the way, I have just realized that all the time I am, of course, thinking in terms of the 'household'. Among non-Catholics, though, there could be no great difference, I suppose—but we need to deal with our own troubles first!

G.H.

## VI

IN A private letter to the Editor someone well-versed in modern problems of psychology writes apropos G.H.'s letter in 'Points of View', July:

"The questions are pertinent indeed, but I don't think generalized answers are possible: I don't think they are, because "neurotics-in-general" do not exist: there are all sorts and kinds, and more exactly still there is just Mr X. or Mrs Y. It's the same

with the "charitable neighbour", his character, circumstances and all the rest; and what is his position vis-à-vis the other? One doesn't know, and until one does I don't see one can presume even to begin an answer. In other words, it's all a matter of personal relations to be worked out between them, and I don't think anyone who doesn't know either can give them any blue-prints or "authoritative answers". But G.H. seems to assume that he is the person with all the charity (though doubtless not a strong nervous system), while the other person has got all the disease. Not very promising for either of them . . . but I should imagine the "neurotic" loathes charity, and G.H. can't do anything for *him* or *her* so long as he is afraid for his own sanity.'

X.Y.



## POINTS OF VIEW (II)

IN A recent article in the *Catholic Herald*, Dom Columba Cary Elwes has brought new courage to many by pointing out that this is the age of the apostleship of the laity, and he has added that 'we are back in a contemplative age, but a contemplation of God in the world as well as out of it'. The laity has become familiar with the idea that it has a part to play in the redemption of the world through Catholic Action. United in such organizations as the Legion of Mary, lay men and women fight side by side to convert the ignorant, to reclaim the lapsed, to bring consolation to the lonely and thus to share in our Lady's work on earth for her divine Son. There are many other forms of organized Catholic Action, such as the Young Christian Workers and the Grail, but all have one thing in common. They seek to instruct their members in the social and moral teaching of the Church, in doctrine and apologetics and they encourage them to build their lives around the centre of the daily Mass and to live in the spirit of the liturgy. In so doing they will learn to give their lives to the service of God in their neighbours. They will learn to serve wisely with the wisdom born of knowledge and of prayer.



Today the many works of social service, of healing and of education are for the most part in the hands of local authorities and government bodies and are undertaken by their employees. It is clear that if such works are to be informed with the Spirit of Christ this can be brought about only by the lay people who are given the control of them. Apart from such specifically charitable and educational work there is no legitimate activity of social man which can claim exemption from the jurisdiction of Christ the King. The vital principle underlying all Catholic Action is that each individual members of the Mystical Body should bring Christ into his home, his work and his recreation. He should use to the full all that modern techniques of study have provided to enable him to understand the social background and the personal problems of all with whom he comes in contact. Jesus understands the needs and the desires of every human heart and we too should seek to understand rather than expect others to conform with our particular pattern of acceptable modes and manners. We live in a generation that tends to lose sight of the individual in consideration of his group. We talk of the problems of the aged rather than the difficulties of old Mr Brown or old Miss Jones. We think of displaced persons who may be at a convenient distance from us and forget the rather trying foreigner who lives next door. The saints, on the contrary, have always loved Christ in individuals and served him by ministering to individual needs. It is this divine love for individuals that is the desperate need of the millions of unhappy people whom we classify as young delinquents, criminals, displaced persons or deprived children. There is a vast thirst for love in the world around us and it is the privilege of the laity to be the bearers of the chalice from which alone that thirst may be quenched. It is we who may go where priests and religious have no right of entry, and going with Christ we can bring his healing and his refreshment to the men and women who have no other opportunity of meeting him.

This is the age of the apostleship of the laity and so great a responsibility demands great grace. We know that when God calls a man to perform a service for him he gives the special grace through which alone the work can prosper. It is not surprising then that our age should be another age of contemplation. That such a statement should be made by the Prior of Ampleforth will puzzle only those who imagine contemplation to be a matter of

visions, ecstasies and the like, or think that it demands conditions of silence and mortification to be found only in the seclusion of religious houses. Many will still be called to the contemplative life of the cloister and by their lives of contemplation they will fulfil God's purpose and bring strength to all parts of the Mystical Body. Many, too, hear the call to contemplation amid the noises and distractions of the world.

Contemplation, defined by Fr Augustine Baker as 'a pure internal prayer, divinely inspired', is a gift that God gives to whom he will. It is a growing awareness of God's presence who dwells in the market place as in the convent cell; it is the constant love of the will tending always towards God and clinging to him in times of temptation and aridity as in times of joy and consolation. It is in the depths of such internal prayer that man meets God, that he is cleansed and instructed by the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. It is in such prayer that he learns, not the self-regarding charity of his earlier years, but the compassion of Christ and the maternal love of Mary. Informed by the love of the Father for his creation, united in love with Christ the Redeemer, taught by the Holy Spirit and touched by his fire, the lay apostle of this age will live to win the world to Christ through the joy, the love and the compassionate understanding imparted to him by the Blessed Trinity in the hidden depths of prayer.

FRANCES D. MEREDITH

## REVIEWS

L'ÉGLISE EN ÉTAT DE MISSION. Par Mgr Léon-Joseph Suenens. (Desclée De Brouwer; 60 fr. belges.)

The Church on earth has always been the Church Militant, but the appeals of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII have made it clear that in this day and age a general mobilization is called for, or as Cardinal Feltrin has expressed it: 'The time has come for the whole Church to be put on a missionary basis.' In this penetrating and comprehensive work Bishop Suenens discusses the implications, for clergy, religious and laity, of the missionary apostolate. In recent years one of the most hotly argued questions, on the Continent if not in England, among those engaged in the apostolate has been the priority expressed by the phrase 'humanize or evangelize'. There were those, notably the group *Jeunesse de l'Église* (condemned by the Holy See in 1953), who took the extreme position that chronologically the apostolate must concern itself with temporal matters, with the social order, and only later with spiritual matters. Bishop Suenens deals with this problem in a balanced fashion, pointing out that the gospel is to be preached to everybody and that the divine life is not reserved to those who have achieved a certain level of material culture. From this point he is able to put the work of the specialized apostolate (of like by like) in its proper perspective, giving a wider meaning to environment but at the same time stressing the fact that every conversion is personal, involving a personal decision.

For the laity Bishop Suenens underlines the importance of the parish, that every parish must be a missionary parish and not just a depot for the Sacraments, and this in its turn demands that the clergy should seek out the leaven and form them for their direct apostolate.

The most original section of the book is devoted to the place of religious in the Church's apostolate, and here the author quotes with great effect the words of the Holy Father to the Congress of Religious in 1950: 'Most often the constitution makers of Religious Institutes began their new foundations to fulfil functions or to serve needs that had appeared in the Church and would brook no delay. So, if you wish to follow the example of your founders, model your attitude on theirs. Study the opinions, the judgments and the ways of your contemporaries among whom you live, and take over from them what you find good and right. If you do not you will not be able to enlighten, help, encourage and *guide* your neighbour.' He sees a place for all active religious in helping with the apostolic formation of girls and women, both in schools and in the parish, and deals thoroughly with all the likely objections; from lack of time, from the necessity of long



religious exercises, from Constitutions. Fundamentally his point is that every religious, before being a member of her Congregation, is a baptized Christian, belonging to the Church and with the duties of membership of a missionary Church.

Bishop Suenens's previous work, *The Theology of the Apostolate*, has already been published in an English translation and one hopes that this present work will soon find an English translator to the advantage of the Church in the English-speaking countries.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

1954 PROCEEDINGS OF THE SISTER'S INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY. Edited by A. Leonard Collins, C.S.C. (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, U.S.A.; \$3.00.)

This is the second volume of proceedings of the Institute for Religious Sisters. During August of last year some eight hundred Superiors gathered for the meetings presided over by Valerio Cardinal Valeri, accompanied by several American bishops. The lectures were delivered by a group of religious priests, American and French. The two French Dominicans, Père A. Plé and Père P. Philippe, already known to readers of this review, concerned themselves with the nature of the adaptation of religious life, and the formation of the novice, respectively. Fr Gerard Kelly, S.J., dealt with some practical psychological problems which the Superior has to face; Fr C. Corcovan, C.S.C., was concerned with the Vow of Obedience; Fr G. Diefenbach, O.F.M.CAP, with the Life of Prayer, and Fr A. Riesner, C.S.S.R., with Canon Law as applied the Vow of Poverty. It will be seen at once that the volume is extremely practical. Père Philippe even gives a detailed horarium as a model for the novitiate. Fr Kelly has a section on scruples. Fr Riesner seems to deviate from St Thomas on the matter of poverty, holding, it would seem, that there is such a thing as the *virtue* of poverty as distinct from the vow. But that is not the main purpose of his paper, which deals with such things as 'expenses for postulancy and novitiate', 'the obligation to make a will', etc. Bishop Pursley, in the concluding address, gives a balanced appreciation of such gatherings. 'There is never on this earth a final solution for all problems. The old ones seem endowed with immortality and the new ones keep growing up out of the changing situations of life.' There is always need to face the present situation with its difficulties; but we must never think that we can provide a cut-and-dried solution which will remain always effective.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE ETHICS OF BRAIN SURGERY. Edited by Dom Peter Flood, O.S.B., M.D., M.C.H., J.C.L. (Mercier Press; 5s.)

This short translation from the French in the Cahiers Laënnec series consists of four essays, each under different authorship. The first outlines the basic facts underlying cerebral surgery; the next two deal with the indications for, and effects of, such operations, the last with the moral considerations. The three medical writers are orthodox, and expert in their own fields: the moral questions are handled by a priest. In themselves, all four essays are serious contributions.

Unfortunately, the book as a whole, lacking firm editorial direction, emerges too detailed and overlapping for lay readers, yet too superficial for doctors. There results an impression of uncertainty on the parts of the medical authors whether they were writing for the profession or the laity—a particular pity, as Dr Houdart's factual summary is excellent as a short medical introduction and Professor Prick's researches could usefully be evaluated in the medical press. Dr Bertagna compromises with valueless references to authors but not their works.

The need of the laity, therefore, remains unsatisfied for a short, clear-cut outline of the salient facts about the types of procedure; their indications, their immediate and prolonged effects and the emergent moral issues. Doctors will find an unbalanced play-down of the importance of modern limited techniques in relation to post-operative personality depletion, as against the largely outmoded standard leucotomy.

Père Tesson's otherwise judicial chapter on morality omits the fundamental consideration, whether this form of operation is a mutilation like castration; wrong, therefore, in itself. He omits also to mention the post-operative possibility of foresightlessness leading to unconcern for one's ultimate end.

Misprints are less frequent and the translation a trifle less grim than in earlier publications; but it lacks essential guidance upon the difference of psychiatric terminology in the two languages.

SEYMOUR SPENCER

THEOLOGY LIBRARY. Volume I. Introduction to Theology. Edited by A. M. Henry, O.P. (Mercier Press; 21s.)

Along with the liturgical revival recent years have seen something like an awakening of Catholic theological thinking, of biblical and of patristic scholarship in France. Among its most valuable products has been the four-volume *Initiation théologique*, edited and written by French Dominicans. It is the first volume of this work which is now given us in an English translation.

It may safely be asserted that the writers of these volumes have

attempted, and on the whole successfully, a task which has so far gone by default in the Catholic community. They have tried to present Catholic theology in a serious and systematic way, yet in the language and the thought-forms of contemporary people. They have drawn their inspiration as well as the general plan of the work from the *Summa Theologiae* of St Thomas; but they do not aim at writing either an introduction to or a summary of his work. Still less do they claim to provide a substitute for those scholastic handbooks (*'secundum mentem Sancti Thomae'*) in which theses are proved and objections to them met. Their approach, for all its creative novelty, is much closer to authentic theological thinking as it was practised and described by St Thomas. For him, as for the writers of this book, theology is a discipline in which human minds bring to bear all their equipment to the understanding of the word of God revealed in the Scriptures, taught by the Church and heard in faith. It is an activity in which the mystery revealed by God is ever and again confronted with the human question 'What do you mean?'; in short, it is the endless quest to understand as far as men may in their present darkness, what they believe. St Thomas's own work takes shape in the form of 'questions' which arise naturally from a reading of the Bible and from further reflection on the sacred text and its commentaries, and from the Church's proclamation in her credal confessions of the mystery revealed by God.

This first volume of the work, accordingly, has a double function: it describes what theology is, and gives an inventory of the material on which its activity is brought to bear: the Bible, the Church's tradition, liturgy, canon law and so forth. It is characteristic of the authors' approach that they have included a chapter (as it happens, one of the least satisfactory in the book) on the 'echo of tradition in art'. Each of these 'sources' is examined in a separate chapter, its status weighed, its contents and history outlined. Sometimes one has the impression, especially in the middle chapters of the book, that too much has been packed into too little space to be of much value. The potted histories of art, of theological systems or of patristic theology are no more illuminating than the summary accounts of the Church's liturgy and canon law, and might well have been replaced by some more general indication of their relevance and their place in the Church's life.

The translation is on the whole both accurate and readable, though disfigured by occasional lapses, sometimes amounting to simple nonsense. The English text also suffers from a surfeit of capitals, and it is a pity that layout and typography have not been used to better purpose and with more taste. But with all these flaws, the appearance of this English translation must be welcomed as an event of unique



importance. As Père Henry writes on the last page of the volume: 'Ultimately, the strength and quality of theology depends not upon the techniques utilised, but upon the depth and religious vitality of the mind which is at work upon the mystery of God.' And the vitality of the minds here at work will surely not fail to awaken and to nourish a similar vitality in the minds of their readers. R. A. MARKUS

LIFE OF CHRIST. By Giuseppe Ricciotti. (Popular Edition.) (Mercier Press; 21s.)

Those who know about Abbot Ricciotti's work in general will know what to expect when they turn to his *Life of Christ*, and they will not be disappointed with this abridged 'Popular Edition'—at least as regards the narrative. Abbot Ricciotti is a scholar without an ounce of pedantry and well able to use his knowledge to throw an ever-helpful light on the gospel narratives. In this work the gospel narratives are admirably woven together and in great part speak for themselves, or are reverently explained and paraphrased. The actual life of Christ is prefaced by a Critical Introduction covering such subjects as The Place and Time, The Roman Procurators, Jewish Beliefs and Practices, The Sources, etc. The essential notions are compactly and clearly put.

The whole work is thus a very attractive life of Christ which is more manageable than some of the classic 'lives' or studies of modern times, and for that reason alone should appeal to a wider English-speaking public.

Unfortunately Abbot Ricciotti's admirable work has in some aspects been ill-served by this particular edition, which is a photographic reproduction of that published by the Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee (1952). Because it is a photographic edition, it has naturally not been possible to make adaptations for English or Irish readers, who will scarcely be helped by being told that Palestine is the size of Vermont or that 300 denarii is more than 80 dollars. Unfortunate too is some of the language, as e.g., when we are told (p. 254) that Judas 'has become hopelessly calloused', or (p. 322), at the Last Supper 'their positions might be diagrammed as follows'.

Most unfortunate has been the reproduction of the maps and plans (especially pp. 72 and 210). The results are obscure, and, if anything, misleading. In these days when such works as the *Westminster Historical Atlas* are available, it seems a pity that Ricciotti's *Life of Christ* cannot be given clear and helpful illustrations, maps, plans, etc.—all of which should show, as far as possible, the real character of the Holy Land, with its sun and light as well as many stark contrasts.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

## NOTICES

DR R. S. LEE is a Freudian psychologist who was invited to deliver the Burroughs Memorial Lectures at Leeds in 1953 on *Psychology and Worship*. These lectures are now published by the S.C.M. Press at 7s. 6d. The reader will learn a good deal of general information regarding the Freudian approach to religion, and also sound reflections on the sacraments and prayer, though these naturally lose something in not being Catholic.

FR JOHN DONOHUE, S.J., on the other hand gives a very Catholic view of *Christian Maturity* (P. J. Kenedy, New York; \$3.50) with a good deal of common-sense psychology thrown in. Like Dr Lee, he is concerned with the fostering of the mature Christian, and in this study he brings most of the Catholic doctrine of God and man to bear on the matter. If any criticism were to be offered it would be that he is *too* 'Catholic' in the sense that some Catholics make the Faith almost into a Sect.

NEXT YEAR sees the quincentenary of the rehabilitation of St Joan of Arc. Messrs Methuen have prepared the way for the event by publishing a translation, by J. M. Cohen, of Regine Pernoud's book on *THE RETRIAL OF ST JOAN OF ARC* (16s.). The book consists almost entirely of the depositions of witnesses, put deftly into their historical context by the author, at the second trial. The witnesses were those who had known Joan both in her childhood and in her public life. The story never fails to rouse interest and enthusiasm, but when it comes from the lips of those who had experienced the saint's simplicity, charm and piety it is more moving than usual.



## EXTRACTS

A reader of 'Extracts' was attracted by the reference in the July issue to the use of the Missal by the laity. We may quote from his letter: Your reference to the use and abuse of the Missal is timely. It (the Missal) has not succeeded in promoting the communal mind or spirit of the liturgy. On the contrary it seems to have begotten a



type of Catholic Pharisee, completely isolated from the common herd and contemptuous of common prayer or congregational singing. . . . I fear that there will be no general advances in the direction of the liturgy here (in Ireland) until retreat givers have assimilated the doctrine of the mystical body and preach it to their brother teachers and clergy. Our seminaries ignore the parish liturgical movement. . . . I myself taught Church Music in the diocesan seminary for years and lectured on Plain Chant, but I saw that the plain chant movement was leading nowhere. Common prayer from the Missal at the ordinary low Mass is the thing to concentrate on for the present. The writer, the Very Rev. J. Fennelly, enclosed a copy of *The People's Mass Book* (Gill, Dublin; 1s.) compiled by himself and used with great success first in his own parish and now increasingly throughout his country.

The low Mass is likely to remain, for many years to come, the popular form of public worship in Ireland: the sung Mass will be a rare event in parish life. Nevertheless, pastors ought to provide, at least occasionally, opportunities for the people to attempt the more perfect form of liturgical worship. The patronal feast of the church suggests itself as an occasion for gathering the parish family together to sing round the altar; this will help to promote a much-needed community spirit. If the simple chants for the *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei* in this book have been used regularly at the Children's Mass adults will have no difficulty in joining in. *Gloria*, *Credo* and Responses can be taken from the *Congress Hymn Book*.

It runs the Preface; and the little book includes not only these chants, but also preparatory chants and prayers to be used before Mass. The whole provides a novel, and one would think a successful, method of assisting the congregation to pray as a body. The author is surely to be commended for his pioneer work, though in some other countries the liturgical movement is already emerging from the arid stage of trappings of vestment, rubrics and Plain Chant.

On this subject, *Worship*, the American Benedictine Liturgical Review, which is improving every year, has an article in the July issue on 'The Priest's Part in Parish Music' which follows the same line as Fr Fennelly's thought.

As chief liturgist of the parish he (the pastor) is responsible for the music of the liturgy. But what can he do, besides give welcome encouragement to organist and choir—especially if he has no ear for music? . . .

When at the altar, could he not gradually become more aware of the community with him, of Christ as mediator, and of the dedication to the Father expressed in the Sacrifice? . . . Has the pastor

ever told them (the people) that liturgical music is prayer and actual part of an act of worship? . . . But liturgical music can be a true act of worship and perfectly functional only on condition of a triple union: between the congregation as a whole and the music, and between that music and the spirit of the service.

The author, Fr Charles Dreisoerner, S.M., then gives some practical rules for teaching this high ideal.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER of America publishes in its July-August number from a chapter an unpublished MS. by Dom Virgil Michel O.S.B., on 'Catholic Spiritual Life', some of which has bearing on what we have already quoted.

Why the term 'spiritual'? Is not all Catholic life *ipso facto* spiritual life? Or again, one might ask whether there is any true spiritual life possible outside the Catholic Church as the true Church of Christ? There is no doubt that it has been possible for Catholics to discuss the spiritual life as if it were constituted of a number of segregated and specialised acts or exercises having little direct connection with the rest of one's life. What is still more strange, whole treatises on the spiritual life can be written by Catholics with no reference at all, or only a casual one, to the liturgy of the Church. This is indeed an anomaly, since there can be no truly Catholic life, least of all any such spiritual life, without the liturgy. The latter is *par excellence* the spiritual life of the Church and therefore officially also that of the faithful as members of the mystical body of Christ. . . . It is the liturgy that gives a solid objective basis to the spiritual life of the Catholic, by furnishing him with a firm foundation in the doctrines it ever holds up to view, and by presenting these doctrines in their intimate connection with the practice of religion.

The author goes on to show how the liturgy plays an essential part in personal sanctity not only in the official, active participation in 'the mysteries', but also in the individual's private devotion.